

Cliff Trail Safety between Jan Juc and Torquay



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

March 2025

What are you doing to the Surf Coast Trail?

We are focusing on the section of the coastal trail between Jan Juc Surf Lifesaving Club and Rocky Point in Torquay. The trail is on Wadawurrung Country.

What do the works involve?

We will soon begin work on a new path linking the inland Torquay Golf Course trail to the Surf Coast Trail.

The alternative route is being delivered in response to significant coastal erosion impacting the east section of the Surf Coast Trail between the Jan Juc Surf Lifesaving Club and Rocky Point in Torquay.

The trail will provide a safe alternative to the coastal trail, which is likely to close in the next few years because erosion will make it unsafe.

Why does the coastal trail need to close?

An independent geotechnical assessment revealed that 1.5 metres of the cliff could erode in the next 20 years and sections of the trail will be unsafe and likely to close permanently within a few years.

Keeping trail users safe is our highest priority, while also protecting the cultural, environmental and recreational values of the cliff and dunes.

The coastal trail is currently safe to use, and we are monitoring it closely.

When will the new linking trail be available?

Works are due to begin the week of Monday 3 March 2025 and are estimated to take one week to complete weather permitting.

Signage will be in place during vegetation removal and construction of the new trail. Temporary closure of the inland golf course trail will occur during the works. The Surf Coast Trail section from Jan Juc to Rocky Point will remain open for use.



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What are you doing to the beach stairs?

The stairs on the east side of Jan Juc beach will be upgraded to maintain beach access. We will confirm the timing for replacing the stairs once we have completed the path.

Technical assessments recommend that the Rocky Point stairs should not be replaced.

What is causing the erosion?

The coast is dynamic and always changing, shaped by natural coastal processes such as erosion and inundation.

At times, natural processes may have a negative impact on coastal values and uses. When this occurs, we refer to the processes as coastal hazards.

Coastal hazard exposure is expected to increase with changes in wave action, storm activity and sea level rise associated with climate change.

When will it need to close?

The coastal trail will need to close when safety thresholds are reached.

We are actively monitoring the cliff and trail and using an evidence-based approach to guide our decisions.

The timeframe for the closure is unpredictable and dependent on storm and climate conditions, but our assessments show that the east section of the trail (closest to Rocky Point in Torquay) is at the greatest risk of erosion and will most likely need to close first. This is likely to happen in the next five years.

We are committed to keeping our community informed about what we learn as we continue to monitor the cliff and the trail.

Our approach follows the direction of the **Marine and Coastal Policy 2020** and **Victoria's Resilient Coast – Adapting for 2100+**, which provide guidelines to enable best-practice and long-term coastal hazard risk management and adaptation.

What safety measures are in place to protect trail users?

The trail is currently safe to use and is being actively monitored through ground and aerial assessments.

Safety barriers have been installed, and the trail has been moved back from the edge of the cliff, where possible, to extend the time the trail can safely remain open.

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How will I know when it's no longer safe?

We will inform the public immediately when safety thresholds are reached and the coastal trail needs to close. We will install signage on site, speak directly with trail users and spread the message via media channels.

We have been discussing the likely closure of the coastal trail with the local community and, in early 2024, formally engaged with trail users to raise awareness of safety issues and gain a deeper understanding of what our community values about the trail.

We thank the people who generously shared their feedback during our community engagement process.

How many people use the trail?

The trail is much loved and popular with both locals and visitors. We know that about 4300 people use the trail each month and feel a deep connection to the stunning coastal views.

How is the safety of the trail being monitored?

We monitor erosion through the Coastal Monitoring Program. We also conduct ground checks and use drone footage that shows large-scale and long-term changes.

We specifically look for signs of depressions and cracks, as well as measuring how much the cliff is receding.

Coastal hazard assessments will be refined through local knowledge and data, and the best available science.

How will the trail be constructed?

The trail will be made using Gherang gravel – the same sandy-coloured gravel you see on other parts of the Surf Coast Walk.

The new linking trail will connect users to the west section of the coastal trail in the likely event that the east section closes first.

When both east and west sections close, the linking trail will continue to offer coastal views and access to Jan Juc beach.

In the meantime, while the coastal trail remains safe, people will have the option to continue to walk along it or use the linking trail to access the alternative inland path.

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Will the new path disturb the dunes and animal habitat?

The trail is on Wadawurrung Country and the dunes in this area are important to the Wadawurrung People, providing important coastal habitat for threatened animals and plants, such as the Rufus Bristlebird and Coastal Moonah Woodland.

The new linking trail will be created using low impact construction techniques, including hand tools, to minimise disturbance to the ground.

It will be built on flat land to conserve the dune environment and provide better accessibility. The route identified has been selected as it will cause the least disruption to existing cultural and environmental values.

Will I still be able to see the ocean?

This linking trail will enable trail users to enjoy coastal views and access the beach once the east and west sections of the trail close in the future.

Why can't you just move the trail a little further in?

The alternative inland path provides long-term access between Jan Juc and Torquay. Moving the existing trail a little further inland would only provide a temporary fix, as erosion will continue to impact the safety of the cliff.

Moving the trail would also impact important coastal habitat.

We understand that the trail, and its stunning coastal views, are important to people who live in and visit the our coast, and that people will be disappointed and saddened by its necessary closure.

Safety is our number one priority and we are fortunate we can provide access to the alternative inland path so that people can enjoy safe and uninterrupted access between Jan Juc and Torquay, now and well into the future.

Is the beach underneath safe?

The beach underneath the cliff remains safe and we will continue to monitor conditions.

What do I do if I see a crack or something concerning?

If you see something concerning along the trail or any other part of our coast, [please contact us](#).

Local knowledge, combined with data and the best available science is how we refine our coastal hazard assessments.

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Is erosion happening along other parts of the Great Ocean Road?

Coasts are dynamic environments impacted by storms that are increasing in severity and frequency due to climate change. In some locations along the Great Ocean Road, this erosion is occurring at a fast rate and is impacting important community assets and infrastructure.

For example, in 2020, a section of the Surf Coast Walk in Aireys Inlet was closed due to concerns about cliff collapse. A safer, alternative route was constructed and opened in mid-2021.

Additionally, the beach at Demons Bluff in Anglesea was closed permanently in 2021 due to public safety concerns about landslides.

We take a partnership approach to plan for and manage coastal hazards along our beloved coastline, now and into the future. Our approach follows the direction of the Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 and Victoria's Resilient Coast – Adapting for 2100+ framework and guidelines.